

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Project Sponsors and Prospective Applicants

**FROM:** Beth R. Shumate

**DATE:** November 20, 2013

**RE:** Recreational Trails Program Update

As the next Recreational Trails Program application cycle opens, I would like to update all of you regarding important topics: upcoming application deadline for fiscal year 2014; 2014 funding availability; Transportation Alternatives Program; and, RTP training sessions.

RTP 2014 Application Process and Deadline: The current application cycle will occur between December 3 and March 1. The application deadline will be 4:00 p.m. on March 1, 2014. We will post all of the application materials in the WebGrants online system and open the application process on December 3 so you can begin working on your applications. In the meantime, you can still work on your grant application documents by accessing updated documents on the RTP Web page at: <a href="http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html">http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html</a>. The application narrative questions and scoring criteria are nearly the same from previous grant cycles. You can also initiate your letters of support and complete your environmental review documents for your project. We will only accept applications through the <a href="https://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html">https://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html</a>. We will only accept applications through the <a href="https://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html">https://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html</a>.

<u>Funding Update</u>: We anticipate receiving approximately 1.32 million for fiscal year 2014. Due to the delays in passing legislation at the federal level, the funding will most likely become available in increments. For the 2013 grant cycle, half of the federal funds became available in January and the other half was released in June.

## Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)

MAP-21 establishes a new program to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects that were previously eligible activities under separately funded programs. Funding is derived from various programs, encompassing most activities funded under the Transportation Enhancements (a.k.a. CTEP), Recreational Trails, and Safe Routes to School programs previously

funded under SAFETEA-LU (previous transportation legislation). The delayed RTP application deadline will allow project sponsors that also applied for Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds through MDT to receive notification of their success or failure prior to applying for RTP funds. TAP applicants will be notified by MDT in the December/January timeframe, which will allow enough time for those who are unsuccessful to prepare an RTP application. You can reference the Montana Department of Transportation's website at:

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta\_application.shtml for up-to-date information about the TAP

<u>Transition to WebGrants System</u>: One hundred percent of the grant management processes are now automated online, which has led to streamlining and efficiency in the grant application and management processes. The WebGrants system also allows on-going grant management, financial tracking, and reporting. We successfully transitioned the entire reimbursement/claims process to the WebGrants system this spring. The Recreational Trails Program and the Off-Highway Vehicle Program have completely transitioned to the online system with the Snowmobile Program scheduled to be implemented by April.

<u>RTP Training Sessions</u>: In case you missed the Claims/Grant Tracking training sessions held this spring, you will have another chance to attend a training session in January. Hands-on trainings will be offered for all prospective applicants and current project sponsors around the state. This is a complete listing of the upcoming RTP training sessions:

Date:	Location:	<u>Time:</u>
January 3—Kal	ispell, Region 1 FWP Conference Room	9:30-12:30
January 9—Bo	zeman, Region 3 FWP Conference Room	9:30-12:30
January 10—H	elena, FWP HQ Commission Rooms	12:00-3:30
January 14—N	lissoula, Region 2 FWP Conference Room	9:30-12:30
January 16-G	reat Falls, Region 4 FWP Conference Room	9:30-12:30

application process and timelines.

If you need training session information sent to you, feel free to contact me and I will send you the training session information directly.

<u>Conclusion:</u> On behalf of the Recreational Trails Program, I appreciate your patience as it relates to the current grant cycle. Many of you have expressed concerns regarding planning and the upcoming construction season. Unfortunately, the incremental funding situation and the delays in receiving the funds have forced us to delay the application deadline.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this information, please feel free to contact me at 444-4585 or <a href="mailto:bshumate@mt.gov">bshumate@mt.gov</a>. We also encourage you to access the RTP Web page at: <a href="http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html">http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/rtpGrants.html</a> for the most up-to-date information. Thank you for all of the efforts and hard work you put into Montana's outdoor recreation programs and trail systems.